

Records of the Coal Skink in Florida

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THE coal skink (*Eumeces anthracinus*) is not attributed to Florida in most current works, as no specimen had been collected in that state until 1957 and no published reference made to such an occurrence until 1964. The subspecies *Eumeces anthracinus pluvialis* has long been known from Mobile, Alabama. Two specimens in the Florida State Museum are the first known Florida records. The first (no. 9364) was found by William J. Rierner 1 mile east of Argyle, Holmes County, April 22, 1957. Scarcely a month later, May 29, 1957, F. Wayne King collected one (no. 9509) in Gulf County, 1¼ miles east of White City. Both of these are adults and appear quite dark in preservative, the white lines being obscure. Neither record has been published. Seibert (1964) mentioned a subadult caught by Houska and Forsythe 4 miles south of Sumatra, Franklin County, April 3, 1963, which extended the range to the east side of the Apalachicola River. A further range extension of 40 miles eastward was discovered when two juvenal coal skinks were caught by James M. Stevenson at U. S. 319, 2 miles south of the Ochlockonee River, in Franklin County, July 12, 1968. Both were at the edge of a pond in the highway right-of-way, the cleared portion of a titi swamp. An unsuccessful attempt was made to raise one of these to maturity; both are now in the Florida State University reptile collection (no. 647). On a return trip, July 20, two juvenals and one adult were seen but not captured.

As the two juvenal specimens did not entirely conform to the scanty descriptions of young coal skinks available to me, the following data are presented: general coloration lustrous black, except for white or whitish on the chin, supralabials, loreals, and presuboculars, the whiteness decreasing in that order. The median row of subcaudals was about 50 per cent wider than adjacent rows. The following scale counts were made in the first specimen preserved: 27 scale rows at mid-body, one postmental, no postnasal, 6 supralabials, 2 presuboculars. The second specimen had been damaged by ants before it was found dead in the terrarium, but the scale counts that could be made agreed with those of the first

specimen. The respective snout-vent lengths of the two were 28 and 31.5 mm. The tails of both were broken in their capture. The count of scale rows at mid-body indicated the subspecies *pluvialis*, as could be expected. Neither the red coloration about the face nor the blue tail mentioned by Conant (1958) for immatures of this race was present in either specimen. Taylor's (1935) color description of young specimens was probably based on the northern subspecies and does not fit the two Florida juvenals, but the lateral scales are pitted posteriad as he described them (p. 383).

Although coal skinks may be considered rather secretive, it seems unlikely that a population in the Florida Panhandle would have been overlooked for so many years. Rather, the west-to-east chronological sequence of the collections points to a recent range extension.

LITERATURE CITED

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